



The Status of Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse in San Diego County

The Rx Report Card provides concrete data on the scale of the prescription drug abuse problem by looking at multiple factors and data points over the last five years in San Diego County. Readers are cautioned not to consider a single data point alone, but rather are encouraged to look at all of the information, as well as the direction of trends over time.

Misuse and abuse of these drugs have serious consequences for health and safety of San Diego County residents, as well as our public health and safety community systems. Additional detailed data, including an alert about Fentanyl, is available in the 2017 Rx Addendum. Please see page 3 for a list of data sources.

Visit www.SanDiegoRxAbuseTaskForce.org for more information

Table 1. Key Measures of Prescription Drug and Heroin Problems in San Diego County: 2013-2017

	Indicator	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1	Unintentional Rx-Related Deaths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number (Rate per 100,000 residents) 	259 (8.2)	244 (7.6)	248 (7.7)	253 (7.7)	273 (8.3)
2	Emergency Department (ED) Opioid Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Discharges (Rate per 100,000 residents) 	5,723 (182)	6,866 (215)	7,501 (228)	7,005 (213)	Not Available until 2019
3	11th Graders Self Report of Lifetime Rx Misuse	13%		14%		10%
4	Adult Drug Treatment Admissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Admissions Percentage of Prescription Pain Medication 	16,629 4.5%	16,104 4.5%	15,177 4.3%	15,790 4.1%	15,952 3.2%
5	Arrestees Self Report of Rx Misuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Juvenile 	43% 37%	39% 37%	42% 43%	49% 40%	47% 46%
6	Rx Prosecutions¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rx-specific Fraud Charge Other Charges with Rx-involved 	431 1,064	308 1,237	117 1,353	140 1,422	95 1,172
7	Pharmacy Robberies/Burglaries² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Night Break-Ins/Burglaries Armed Robberies 	5 n/a	8 n/a	6 n/a	14 17	25 27
8	Pounds of Safely Disposed Medications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take Back Events Sheriff's Department Collection Boxes 	18,732 13,872	17,676 13,079	14,595 14,725	17,772 15,901	21,824 16,199
9	Annual Number of Dispensed Pills Per County Resident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain Medication³ Anti-anxiety Stimulants 	36 14 4.9	40 13 4.7	39 13 5.2	37 13 5.2	33 12 5.8

¹ Prosecution numbers reported from the San Diego County District Attorney and City of San Diego City Attorney as a combined total.

² Federal law enforcement identified organized criminal street gangs as being responsible for the increase in nighttime pharmacy burglaries for 2017. Offenders have been arrested and are being prosecuted. Data prior to 2016 include both robberies and burglaries.

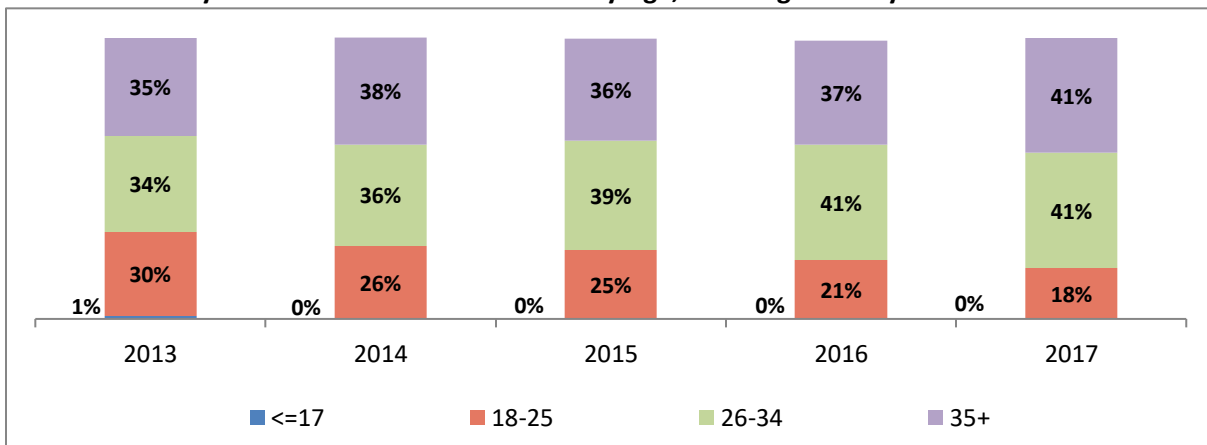
³ Tramadol has been used for pain for many years but was only added as a Schedule IV medication in August 2014, thus added to CURES. Without Tramadol, the 2016 rate is 30.2; there were 19 Tramadol deaths in both 2012 and 2013, 20 in 2014, and 17 in both 2015 and 2016.

2018 Heroin Addendum

Heroin abuse is a recognized national problem. San Diego County's experience is unique. From 2013-2017, heroin seizures were at high points in 2015 and 2017, and heroin overdose related deaths peaked in 2014. Local and national studies note that younger users switch to heroin after painkillers are harder to find or become unaffordable.

Selected Heroin Indicators	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1. Heroin Seizures (Kgs.) at San Diego County Ports of Entry	689	756	941	591	933
2. Heroin Price per Gram	\$50-100	\$50-70	\$40-80	\$40-80	\$40
3. Adult Arrestees Testing Positive for Heroin	12%	13%	12%	11%	13%
4. Treatment Admissions with Heroin Listed as Primary Drug of Choice	25%	28%	29%	28%	27%
5. Number of Heroin Overdose Deaths	86	105	90	90	83

Primary Heroin Treatment Admissions by Age, San Diego County



Naloxone

Naloxone is an antidote to a heroin overdose that is delivered as a nasal spray or injection. In 2015, the Sheriff's Department expanded Naloxone distribution to all patrol cars in the nine contract cities and unincorporated areas.

Drug-Related Naloxone Use	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
By Emergency Medical Services	1,141	1,212	1,210	1,304	n/a
By Sheriff Department		15 uses* 1 death	13 uses 2 deaths	16 uses 4 deaths	26 uses 4 deaths

*6 months only

Definitions and Sources for Report Card Indicators

1. Unintentional deaths with prescription drug or involvement. San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) population figures based on 2010 Census data. *Source: County of San Diego Medical Examiner's Office.*
2. Emergency department discharges per 100,000 with a diagnosis of opioid dependence or abuse. *Source: County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services.*
3. Percent of a sample of San Diego County 11th graders who report using Rx drugs for non-medical reasons in their lifetime. Collected biannually in the California Healthy Kids Survey.
4. Total admissions to publicly-funded drug treatment in San Diego County that identify Rx Opioids as primary drugs of choice. *Source: California Outcomes Measurement System (CalOMS).*
5. Percent that report lifetime Rx misuse/abuse from a sample of interviews among adult and juvenile arrestees at time of booking. *Source: Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM), a program operated by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).*
6. Number of defendants prosecuted by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and the City of San Diego City Attorney (misdemeanors only) for either Rx-related fraud, or other criminal charges where Rx was present. *Source: San Diego County District Attorney's Office and San Diego City Attorney's office.*
7. Number of pharmacy robberies & burglaries reported to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Does not include attempted robberies and burglaries. *Source: DEA*
8. Pounds of medication safely disposed at Rx Take Back events. *Source: DEA.* Pounds collected at Sheriff's Department collection boxes. *Source: San Diego County Sheriff's Department.*
9. Prescription pills per San Diego County resident. The numbers of prescribed pills are derived from prescriber (dispenser) reporting to the state, and do not include prescriptions filled at the VA, any military hospitals and clinics, or in-hospital patient medications. Three principle groups of medicine are included:
 - a) Pain medication or morphine-related pain medications such as OxyContin or hydrocodone;
 - b) Anti-anxiety medications or benzodiazepines such as Valium or Ativan;
 - c) Stimulants or ADHD medication such as Ritalin, Adderall.

Pain medication includes only pills; solution-based prescriptions are 2.5% of all pain medication and are not included. Population figures used to calculate per person rates are based on US Census and SANDAG population projection data across all ages. *Source: Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES), California Department of Justice.*

Note: Heroin indicators are also drawn from the Medical Examiner's Office, SANDAG's Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program and the CalOMS treatment database. Seizure and price information was obtained from the San Diego Law Enforcement Coordination Center.

Preliminary PDATF Addendum

A. Death Details

The following data is provided by the San Diego County Medical Examiner. While death represents the tip of the iceberg of prescription and other substance abuse, these numbers are also an absolute and visible sign of the misuse and abuse problem.

Table 1: Number of Deaths Caused by Prescription Opioids and Heroin: 2007-2017

A. Prescription Drugs (Rx): Opioid Rx vs. Non-Opioid Rx	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
• Rx opioids	175	186	194	188	221	219	208	185	205	207	208
• All other Rx (excluding Rx opioids)	34	34	43	37	41	50	51	59	43	46	65
All Rx Deaths	209	220	237	225	262	269	259	244	248	253	273
B. Heroin	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
• Heroin	58	74	73	70	80	74	89	105	90	91	86
• Other illicit substances and/or alcohol	352	330	342	388	394	421	455	381	420	454	441
All Deaths (includes Rx, heroin, illicit substances and/or alcohol)	410	404	415	458	474	495	544	486	510	545	527

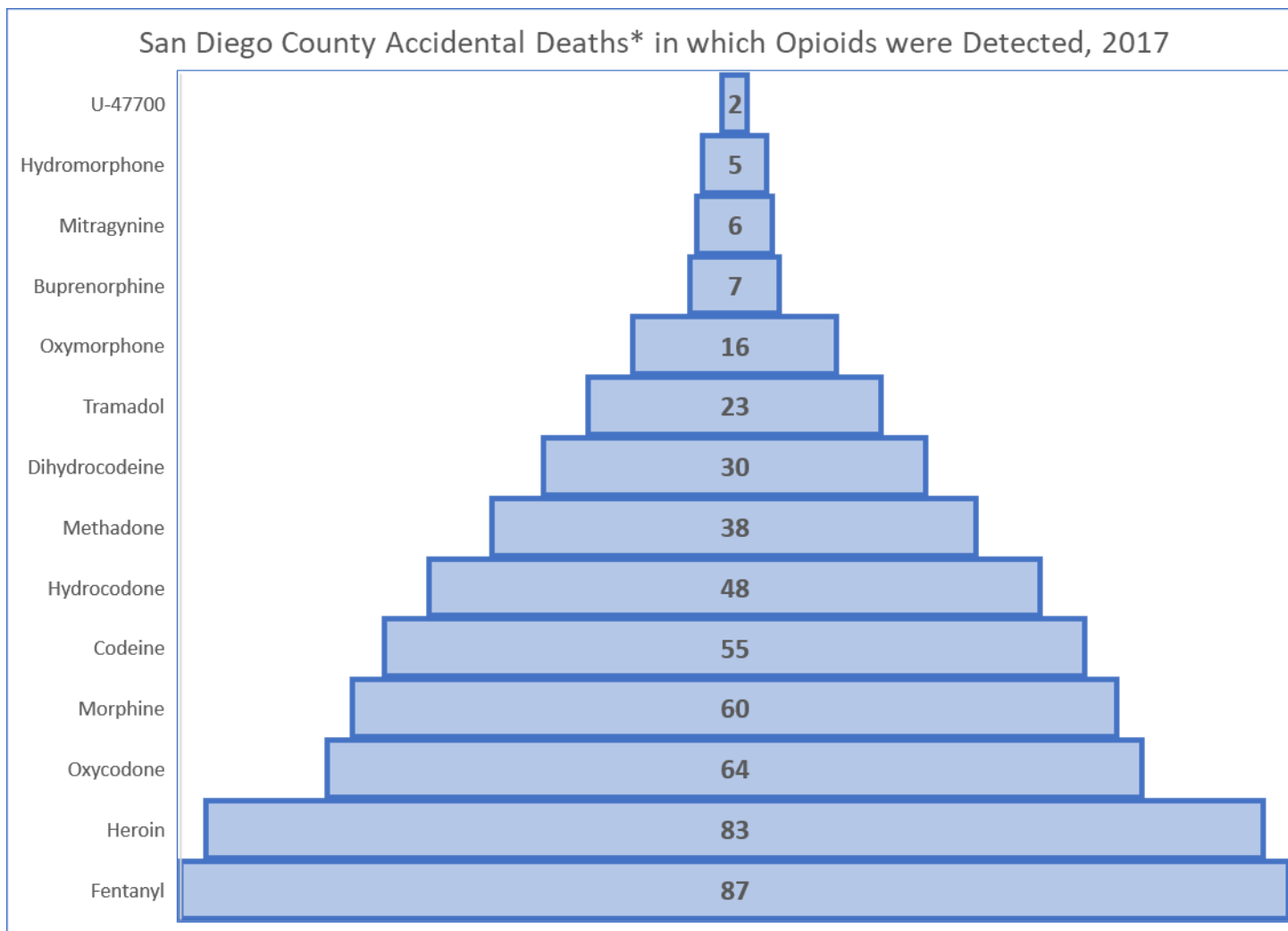
Table 2: Rx-Caused Deaths by Race/Ethnicity, 2017

	Number	Rate per 100,000
White	207	6.3
Hispanic	34	1.0
Black	21	0.6
Other	5	0.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	<1%
Native American	2	<1%
Total	273	8.1

Table 3: Rx-Caused Deaths by Age and Gender, 2017

Age	Female	Male	Total	Rate per 100,000*		
				Female	Male	Total
0-14	1	0	1	<1%	<1%	<1%
15-24	2	18	20	<1%	0.6	0.6
25-34	9	57	66	0.3	1.7	2.0
35-44	19	25	44	0.6	0.8	1.3
45-54	20	26	46	0.6	0.8	1.4
55-64	31	41	72	0.9	1.3	2.2
65+	13	11	24	0.4	0.3	0.7
Total	95	178	273	2.8	5.4	8.3

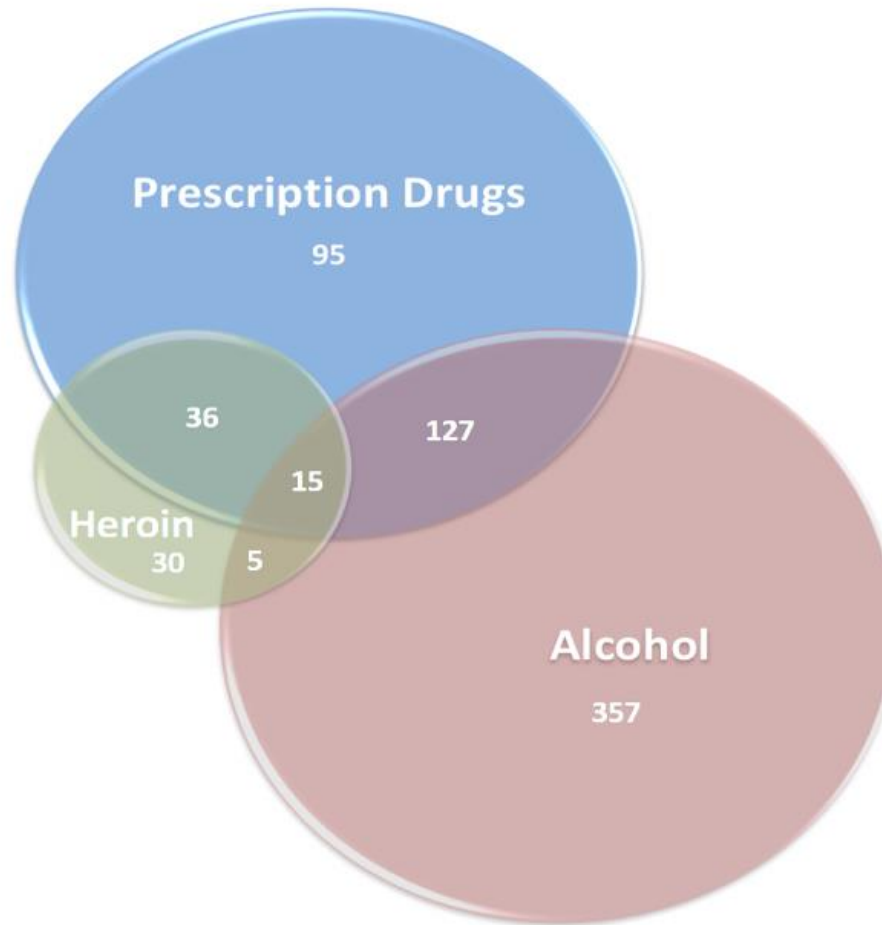
Figure 1.



*Accidental deaths not only include unintentional drug overdoses but other unintentional deaths such as car crashes and falls. Drug detection is not mutually exclusive as several deaths were positive for multiple opioids.

Figure 2.

Relationship Between Prescription Drug, Heroin, and Alcohol Deaths in San Diego County, 2017



Source: County of San Diego Medical Examiner's Office, 2018

B. Fentanyl Trends

The United States Attorney’s Office is reporting a substantial spike in fentanyl seizures at the Ports of Entry in 2016 and 2017. Fentanyl, a Schedule II synthetic opioid painkiller produced in clandestine laboratories, can be 100 times more potent than morphine and 25 to 50 times more potent than heroin. In recent years, Mexican drug cartels have begun producing fentanyl for distribution in the United States.

A federal, state and local task force is collaborating to ensure coordinated disruption and prosecution of fentanyl distributors. Work includes:

- * Targeted doctors who knowingly prescribed opioids without a legitimate medical reason.
- * Charged operators of a commercial shipping facility used to send pharmaceuticals across state lines to U.S. purchasers.
- * Indicted couriers who attempted to smuggle thousands of counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl.
- * Took down prescription drug trafficking rings.

Figure 3.

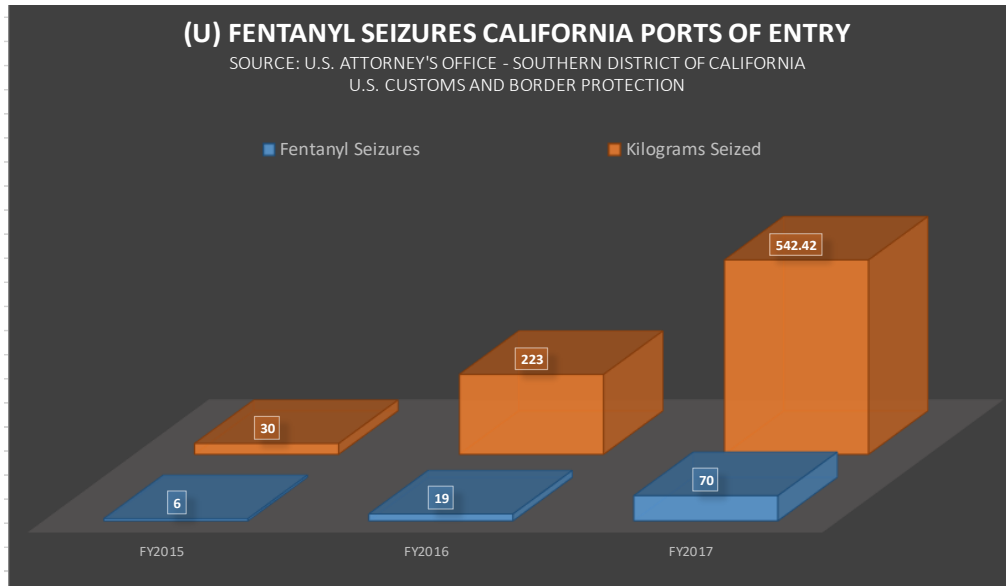


Table 4. Number of Unintentional Fentanyl Deaths in San Diego County

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
12	14	12	14	15	21	33	84

Source: San Diego County Medical Examiner’s Office, 2018

C. Additional Indicators

Figure 4. Primary Drug of Choice for Admissions to San Diego County Treatment Program

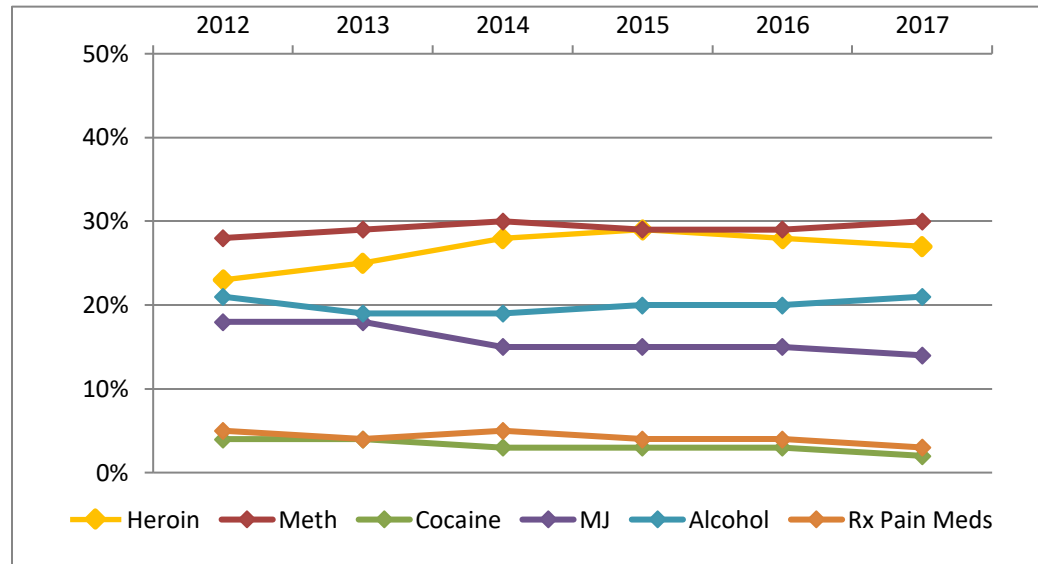


Table 5: SANDAG Self-Report Method of Obtaining Rx Drugs

	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile
Given	91%	76%	94%	78%	77%	89%	72%	77%
Bought	52%	45%	67%	61%	50%	51%	62%	53%
Stole	21%	33%	33%	30%	23%	32%	22%	38%



2016 Street Pill Prices: Prices continue to vary, but a sampling of prescription drug street prices include:

- Adderall: \$10-15
- Fentanyl Patch: \$20-30
- Hydrocodone: \$5-10
- Oxycodone: \$8-30
- Alprazolam: \$3-15

